THE

Harbinger of Light.

A

MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

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CONTENTS.

Considerable disappointment has been expressed by many persons interested in Spiritualism, at the intimation given in the newspapers that the St. Petersburgh Commission for the Investigation of Spiritualism had given in an unfavorable report. No particulars being given, the inference would naturally be that the said Commission had arrived at their conclusion after a thorough and exhaustive examination of the various Phenomena occurring through mediums of repute, in whom the general body of Spiritualists had directly or indirectly expressed confidence. This inference, however, would be a very erroneous one, and we, therefore, feel it incumbent to present to our readers the whole facts of the case as given by the Hon. D. Aksakoff and Professor Butleroff, who were both members of the Scientific Commission alluded to. To the former gentleman was intrusted the task of finding suitable media to bring before the Committee. This he found no easy matter, mediums of good repute and standing, were loth to leave their sphere of useful action and travel to a foreign country to submit themselves to the dictation of a number of men, nearly all of whom were opposed to a belief in the phenomena, and who would look upon them as imposters, until they could succeed in the face of all opposing influences in forcing conviction upon them. A medium having every confidence in the genuineness of his power, would hesitate before placing himself in such unfavorable conditions, for it is well-known that a strong opposing mental influence neutralizes to a great extent the mediumistic power, and unless this can be augmented by some sympathetic support the manifestations may fail entirely. This is exemplified in the case of the "Petty Boys" the first mediums submitted by M. Aksakoff to the Committee. In the presence of these Boys whilst resident at Newcastle, in England, Materialization and other physical phenomena occurred under the strictest test conditions, and the parents being willing M. Aksakoff engaged them to proceed with him to St. Petersburg. At some preliminary sittings, held at his own house, after their arrival in Russia, the power was found to be much weaker, the boys being withdrawn from familiar and congenial surroundings, and from the presence of their mother, (who being, also, mediumistic herself, had doubtless augmented their power), did not evolve the mediumistic aura in sufficient quantity to produce the ordinary results. The Committee were ready to begin and having no other media available M. Aksakoff submitted the boys (aged 13 and 15), but after four sittings with but trifling results, he decided to withdraw them, and wait the arrival of another medium, Mrs. C——. At this juncture Professor Mendeleyeff, the Chairman, of the Commission, most indecently came forward and delivered a lecture on Spiritism, referring to the four unsuccessful seances, and displaying a strong animus against the whole subject, from which it was evident that he had already come to a foregone conclusion.

It had been arranged by the Committee that forty sittings should be held, and M. Aksakoff naturally considered that making fair allowance for failures he would be able to present sufficient varied and important phases of the phenomena to satisfy any impartial tribunal of their supermundane origin. The sequel proves that the tribunal in question was not an impartial one. On the 11th January, Mrs. C—— was introduced to the Committee, and the usual manifestations which characterize her mediumship—loud raps, movements, and levitations of the table, occurred with great strength; three more seances held on the 25th, 27th, and 29th, were productive of similar results. Between the 11th and 25th of the month the medium was unwell, and unable to attend a sitting which had been appointed, yet although due notice of her indisposition was sent to the Committee, they determined to count the intended night as one of the forty which they had bound themselves to hold. In arranging the plan of the investigation last year a resolution was passed that immediately after each seance, a report should be written out and signed by the witnesses on both sides, but M. Aksakoff

informs us that instead of this being done, the reports were filled several days after, and not in the presence of witnesses, but presented to them for signature, as prepared by the Commission, and when they could not be altered in any particular. The Commission encouraged persons to act as eavesdroppers, peeping through the keyholes, &c., and then recorded their private testimony in their reports, and although accepting such unreliable personal testimony, actually refused the offer of M. Aksakoff to select a lady of their acquaintance for the purpose of examining the feet of the lady medium, under the pretext that personal testimony was not convincing! M. Aksakoff states that the reports are inaccurate, as demonstrated by the individual reports made by himself and other witnesses and on the 13th February he learned that the report of the seance of January 27 was not filled up. The witnesses or friends of the medium were not allowed copies of the report, but M. Mendeleyeff and M. Bobileff published exparte statements characterizing the manifestations as trickery and imposture. But the climax was yet to be reached, and it consisted in the Committee insisting on the mediums accepting their conditions absolutely, giving the mediums no voice in the matter, and secondly, deciding that the sittings for the investigation should terminate in May. M. Aksakoff had with considerable difficulty secured the services of the celebrated Dr Slade, who it was arranged should reach Russia about the fall of the year, this fact was fully known to the Committee, yet in the face of it they decided without any adequate reason to block him out by closing the investigation before he could possibly arrive. These, and other equally dishonorable actions on the part of the Committee, induced M. Aksakoff to send in a protest to them, and withdraw the medium, He says:—" But in view of the methods to which the Committee has now stooped, all further investigation, at least with the present medium, is impossible. I have no right to leave Mrs. C——— in ignorance of what people write about her, and these writings consist of dishonorable attempts to prove that she is an imposter. Under the circumstances, I do not feel myself warranted in any longer subjecting a private person, and especially a lady, to uncalled for accusations, which to anyone who feels himself innocent of intended fraud are highly insulting." Seeing that legitimate investigation on a fairly scientific basis is not practicable with the present Commission, who are evidently determined to burke the enquiry, M. M. Aksakoff and Butleroff, have withdrawn from it, and the Commission has been abruptly brought to a close after holding eight sittings. While it is to be regretted that an investigation which in its inception promised so well, should have through the prejudice of its Chairman come to so unsatisfactory a termination, there is a lesson to be learned from it, and that is the inadvisability of urging scientific bigots to approach the subject. Their endorsement of the phenomenal facts is not wanted; there is ample evidence of these facts to satisfy any person who can be convinced by evidence alone, and for those who have ocular demonstration it can generally be obtained by diligently seeking. One by one the more liberal and philosophical scientists approach the subject spontaneously, and these invariably become convinced of its facts, by these means the power and influence of Spiritualism is being legitimately increased, whilst by attempting to proselytyze those whose minds are unprepared for the reception of the Spiritual Philosophy, no substantial results accrue. M. M. Aksakoff and Butleroff intend to pursue their Psychological studies independent of the Commission, and will doubtless attract towards them those who can beneficially join them in the work. By this means more substantial good will ultimately be done for the cause than would have resulted from the Moribund Scientific Commission.

SOUL AND MATTER.

(A communication received at a Melbourne circle on Monday evening, 26 June, 1876.)

The medium controlled by Emanuel Swedenborg, spoke as follows:—

Oh source and centre of all inspiration, including all beings within the perfect circle of thy mystic power—within its influence we live and move and have our being. We turn to thee in thy magnificence and power, and open to thee the inmost sanctuaries of our earthly being, while our souls feel thy inspiration stealing over them.

We pray and open the soul with all its powers to thee who art the Lord, To thee we turn as flowers to the sun; at thy touch we open as the flowers, and receive the full blessing of thy beams. To every fibre of our heart the warm influence of thy love extends, and we grow and stretch to heaven and to thee.

Consider the nature of the soul. Consider as far as your intelligence will permit you, its characteristics manifested to you through matter, its attributes manifested to you within yourselves, its nature as pictured by you in your higher ideals. Consider what this power is which is so strange and so divided in its nature from that which you call matter. It is in vain that you look around for any material likeness of it, and yet look where you will you see its material expression. Yet, mark the difference between the expression and the thing. Words are the means of expressing your thoughts, yet how far is thought removed from words. Words are mere sounds, vibrations of the atmosphere, the other is the direct evidence of the spirit, the emblem of the soul. Consider this well, in it you have the first great key necessary to the solution of the problem of the higher universe. Where is the dividing line? This is the question that must come to you in your hours of meditation. This is the question of questions around which materialists and spiritualists meet in fierce conflict, and this question must be the test of the true spiritualist. Matter does not by infinitesimal gradations become spirit, nor can spirit be reached by any process of material volition. Between that spirit which thinks, feels, aspires, between it and matter there is a great gulf fixed, and yet remember, the palpable expression of that spirit can never be found except through matter. Never found in your sensible experience, never visible to your sight or perceptible to your touch, scarcely is it to be found by reason. It only dawns upon you when in the depths of your own consciousness you feel that omnipotent power that also sways and controls worlds and the destinies of men and nations. But you cannot fully comprehend this mighty power on account of what you call matter.

Then again in those hours of supreme elevation which it is given you occasionally to know. Those hours when you are lifted in the spirit as it were, and elevated from the common level into an ethereal atmosphere, when an unseen influence steals over you, and you feel a union and harmony which is beyond expression. In those moments you may perhaps attain to some conception of spirit and matter.

Matter! wonderful, glorious, marvellous attribute of the infinite, and yet but a tool, a toy to spirit. Spirit! invisible in its own shapes and fashions, yet controlling and ruling that which bears no likeness to it, influencing

it in such a manner as to enable it to bear its message. Matter so miraculous in the infinitesimal gradations of power it possesses, so harmoniously working as if indeed there was a worker; so beautifully and delicately unfolded are its various types and forms. What wonder that some men shut their eyes to that mysterious spirit which seems to enter by the little doors in the higher towers of the intellect, what wonder if some stand in awe of this vast machine, this stupendous, and apparently omnipotent creation, and to think that within its mysterious depths there is also hidden the powers of thought, and sense, and speech. The straining of the intellect, the tension of the mind in trying to grasp these vast ideas, weakens the very tie which links the spirit to the body. It is only during some specially favourable moments can you venture to consider the true nature of the soul, it is only at fixed times that you can venture to unravel it. It is only at the flood tide of spiritual power that you are enabled to rise above those low steps, which at its low water lie bare.

Now this should be the hour when all your spiritual perceptions are quickened and brightened, stripped of their flesh to grasp these thoughts for in them lies the safe guard and the truth inconceivable to ordinary minds.

Of the manifestations and expressions of the soul in nature we need not speak; are you not in yourselves living exemplifications of it.

Is not every flower, every blade of grass, every form and shape of animal life an expression of its manifestation rising higher and higher? Remember however, always that the expression is not the thing, but they are far very far divided. What the thing itself is, we proceed to consider. In order to institute a comparison, think for a moment of something, which you yourself have planned, some good deed it may be, even perchance so small an act as giving a few coins to a suffering fellow being. What connection is there between the thought that prompts that action, and the action itself. The painter's soul is perhaps imbued with the deepest feelings of reverence, love and admiration, and you see his thoughts translated by the beautiful colours on his canvas; where is the link between the conception and the thing?

Next let us consider what are the characteristics of souls? Are they moving about in worlds with slow and faltering feet? ah no! we are tempted to exclaim, how different is the world of soul from the world of matter. What sudden swift far darting motion in the one, what slow and hesitating progress in the other. What divine energy aspiration and what joy is observable in the soul's career, what lack of all these things and of many more is apparent in everything connected with the flesh. Spirit is immutable, eternal, infinite; spirit is God: This is what the inspired have dreamt of, this is what their feeble lips have uttered, after having gained a fuller comprehension of divinity and humanity.

Spirit progresses and expresses itself more and more clearly as may be illustrated by the player, who begins perhaps, with his toy whistle; passes on through the various grades, till at last his fingers rule the mighty organ. The person is the same, but his powers have been developed and refined.

Of the nature of spirit, we can say little, though we know much and we hope to know much more; and we will impart as much as it is possible, or as much as it is wise for you to receive while those natures of yours are in their present state.

There are some who have the material frame entirely under the dominion of the spiritual. These breathe a spiritual atmosphere, and live on spiritual food—they can afford to disregard the envelope which surrounds the sacred flame; they need but little, and they stay not long. They are of a different race or species to the generality of mankind none of the rules of science are of any avail to them. They can disregard the most vital laws of physical existence, for they are not physical, they are spiritual; living almost without food, without exercise or effort. They are in constant communion with those who have gone before, and they live lives of constant meditation and prayer, and attain to a standard of spiritual development, far hidden to the generality of mankind, They derive their nourishment through channels not open to the greater part of humanity. And this greater freedom of spirit releases them in a measure from the control of matter. There is a point in the organism of each man, to which he ought to rise, viz., that proper balance between the spiritual and material forces, which will enable him to retain his life, and to use those forces to the fullest advantage.

These matters must be thought over carefully, each one for himself. Each man must be a law to himself, and as he needs spiritual or material food, or feels in want of intellectual, sensual or spiritual enjoyment to flavor his life, so he must obtain them. Each one in so doing, furthers his own development; and each in so doing promotes the object of the higher life. We will take this subject and discourse as a basis, and on future occasions we will further expand topics which are only lightly touched on here, but which if not fully understood, will leave the rest unsatisfactory. Good night.

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

Several letters and poems received—but from pressure on our space, must be held over until next number.

WHY NOT INVESTIGATE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—As I have now been a reader of your paper for the last seven or eight months, I desire to express the gratification I have experienced, when perusing its pages. Though not a thorough believer in Spiritualism, I am yet constrained to bear witness to the scientific manner in which that subject is treated in your journal. Having been brought up in the "orthodox faith," without any opportunity of investigating the claims of Spiritualism, I have always regarded it till lately, as only a modern form of medieval superstition. And how can people arrive at any other conclusion, when its literature is strictly prohibited by their priestly guides? To my astonishment I find now, that all its pretensions rest on a purely scientific basis, and everything that is spasmodic and irregular, is rejected by its supporters, *in toto*. For many years I have been familiar with the works of Swedenborg, which I consider a very good tonic, when the spiritual system has become enfeebled by the nauseating and copious doses, administered from the popular pulpit; excepting in such cases that have become chronic. I have heard it said all who believe in Spiritualism, are weak-minded dupes; and yet our orthodox guides unhesitatingly appeal to our credulity, when they think proper to announce, *ex cathedra*, some remarkable items of Bible history, such as the serpent up-ending itself and whispering soft things to Eve; Balaam and his ass changing places for the nonce, and other extraordinary occurrences. They do not attempt any explanation of such unusual phenomena, but simply demand their acceptance as literal facts. They may be true or otherwise; but as the sources of information have passed through so many channels, it is hard to say what is authentic. A clerical friend was staying at my house a few months ago, and seeing the *Harbinger* on the table, he took it up and looked into it. After a few minutes' examination, as a result of this wonderful feat, he exclaimed, "some people would believe the moon is made of green cheese;" evidently intending this to convey his conception of the intelligence of any circle who would appreciate such intellectual food. And yet this very individual would on a fitting occasion, mount the rostrum, and unblushingly assert on his own *ipse dixit*, without any attempt at argument, things totally opposed to reason and man's rational instincts. I could have reminded my friend of these things, but as he was my guest at the time, it would scarcely have been civil. Another friend who is also a lay preacher, was visiting our house, when he was asked by one of the family to join a circle. His answer was, "I wouldn't lend you my name for the purpose." And so it is that most

people avoid investigation, for fear of having the dogmas annihilated, to which they are so much attached. As I said before, I am not a spiritualist, for the phenomena connected with the science is of so extraordinary a kind, that it must be seen to be believed. I however, hold the testimony of its advocates, of sufficient importance, to render it a fair subject for investigation. The attitude I occupy is that of wishing to believe, on sufficient evidence. It has been well said that belief is involuntary, and it all depends on the quality of the evidence. This is the case with those that think for themselves. The majority who take their thoughts from others, may be said to have no belief at all. If we can believe that spiritual manifestations, occurred at one period of the world's history, we may suppose them possible now; as nothing of this kind could happen only in agreement with some law, and no divine law can be abrogated, because whatever issues from this source is perfect, and therefore needs no alteration or removal. We might as well suppose that twice 2 would make 5, or a straight line would not be the shortest distance between two points, as to imagine the economy of nature to be subverted.

I am, Sir,
Yours truly,
INVESTIGATOR.

North Coast, Tasmania.

DISCOURSES AND SAYINGS OF JESUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—The statement appearing in the *Spectator* and *Methodist Chronicle* of 17th June, that the seven last verses of the last chapter of Mark, and the 7th verse of the 5th chapter of the 1st Epistle of John are spurious and struck out of the New Testament by the Revision Committee, induced the writer to examine some of the discourses and sayings of Jesus as related in the four Gospels—with the following result, which you will please insert in next number of the *Harbinger*.

Matthew relates a discourse delivered by Jesus to the twelve, and yet among their number we find Judas who betrayed, and Peter who forswore, his Master. It is strange that he should single them out for the purpose of diffusing his religion through the world, if he had any foreknowledge of their faithlessness, and that they should prove traitors to his cause. And yet John declares that " Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." (John 6—64).

" These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, " Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10—5, 6.)

The command to these twelve " not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans," seems a most extraordinary way of declaring his mission to the world at large, and exposes the narrow views Jesus entertained in confining salvation to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But Jesus was a Jew himself, had been brought up in all the prejudices of his countrymen, and had imbibed all their exclusive ideas of God and his providence; and he firmly believed that the Messiah was promised to them alone, and to be limited to the " chosen people of Israel."

This spirit is again displayed when the woman of Canaan beseeches him to cure her daughter, and he refuses, saying, " I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." (Matthew 15—24, 26.) Strange language this in the mouth of the Saviour, calling everyone but the Jews by the abusive term of dogs and swine, and limiting salvation to a small section of people living in Judea.

After these positive declarations of Jesus that his saving grace was to be limited to the house of Israel (a mere fraction of mankind), and which were afterwards confirmed by the Apostles themselves, in their strong opposition to Paul when he proposed to extend his preaching to the Gentiles; the early Christians felt themselves in a dilemma, whose orders to obey—Paul or Jesus. But a less scrupulous follower soon settled this point, by surreptitiously inserting a few passages at the end of Mark's Gospel, whereby Jesus is made to contradict himself, by commanding them, " Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark 16—15.)

This order was never questioned, and the discrepancy was easily got rid of, by explaining it as " an afterthought of Jesus!" But the critical acumen and research of the present age have discovered that this passage is a grave forgery of the early Christians; for that the twelve last verses of Mark are wanting altogether in the early Greek copies, as proved by Jerome and Gregory, A.D. 371. Gregory states that in the most exact copies of Mark's Gospel, it concludes with the words, " for they were afraid," and Jerome says, "that in all the Greek copies the last twelve verses of Mark were wanting."

" He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." (Mark 16—16.)

What can we think of such withering influence, where the fear of consequences is a stronger principal than love of truth; where speculation is paralyzed by the belief that conclusions, honestly arrived at, will be punished by a just and good God, by eternal damnation, or by seeing in every text of Scripture a foregone conclusion, with which the results of inquiry, must at any expense of sophistry and self-deception, be made to square!

The excision of these 7 verses in Mark must be felt as a heavy stroke to missionary labour throughout the world, and the passage 1 John, 5, 7, which affirms the Doctrine of the Trinity so strongly, will be felt equally destructive to its existence for any lengthened period as a Doctrine of the Church.

Jesus, moreover, told his disciples to " preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10—7), exactly what John the Baptist had announced. And Jesus, therefore, was literally following in his steps. It may be asked, Why did he not announce himself at once as the Messiah, if he really believed himself to be so? The truth is, that he did not at this time indulge in these lofty views or aspire to the Messiahship. He therefore ventured no farther than John, to prepare the way for the Messiah's expected coming. This is clearly shown in verse 23, " For verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." Virtually saying, the Son of Man has not yet come, but that before they had completed their mission he would appear.

All that was required of the converts at this time was merely a belief in Christ, and an immersion in water with promise of repentance. It does not appear that a belief in a Trinity or the Godhead of Jesus, or Original Sin, or an Atonement, was required of them. Jesus was merely announced to them " as a man" (Acts 2—22), and this was the Jewish belief of their expected Messiah. They looked for a man of sufficient power and influence to deliver them from the Roman yoke; and it is clear that the first disciples adhered to Jesus only, because they believed that he was soon to come as a victorious prince under whom they expected, according to his promise, places and preferment in the kingdom he was about to establish.

Until the time of the Reformation there was no safety for the people but in the bosom of the Roman Church, and no alternative but to be born, and educated, and die in its holy communion. As all in the ark were saved; and all out of it were drowned, so it was proclaimed in regard to the Church; and all out of its pale were denounced as reprobates and outcasts. During this long and dreary period, generation after generation passed away, and mankind were born and baptized, and confessed, and anointed; and starved, and whipped, and tortured, and burned—till the most perfect uniformity prevailed throughout Christendom—and thus was Christianity permanently established!

For nearly two hundred years after the Reformation the leaven of priestcraft still continued fermenting; and it was considered by the Protestant Churches a crime worse than sacrilege to dispute the divinity of any of the books of the New Testament. Full two centuries elapsed

before Protestants ventured to return to the same liberty of thinking as the Primitive Christians, and up to the present time a searching and conscientious inquiry has gone on, steadily progressing, in the investigation of the truth and genuineness of Scripture; and, through the liberality of the present age, liberty of conscience and and right of private judgment are in general respected.

In a revelation thus professing to emanate from God himself, his own nature ought surely to be stated so clearly as to leave no room for doubt or uncertainty. On this important point, however, awful differences of opinion exist.

The Trinitarians find in the Bible that there is one God in three persons, each of whom is God,—hence there are three Gods in one. These three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they call the Holy Trinity.—The Unitarians, on the other hand, find in the Bible that the Father alone is God; and as for the Son, they unite in denying his Godhead, and also the Godhead of the Holy Ghost.

Now this difference of opinion involves the most serious consequences; for, if Trinitarianism be true, "Unitarians must be guilty of blasphemy, as being rebels to their God in degrading the Lord that bought them." And if Unitarianism be true, then "we who offer him (Jesus) that homage which is due to God alone, are, without doubt, as really guilty of idolatry as the worshippers of the deified heroes of Greece and Rome." (Wardlaws-Disc.)

The miraculous conception of Christ is rejected by the Unitarians "as a fiction equally absurd with that of Jupiter and Danae." (Belsham's Inq.) His Incarnation, "When a Virgin daughter produced her father, and a creature her Creator," is denounced also as a blasphemous impiety" (Evanson's Reply.) "No sooner was Christ's Incarnation preached, but it was almost as quickly denied, even by those who pretended to be his disciples," and Sir Isaac Newton has predicted "that the time will come when this doctrine shall be exploded as an absurdity equal to Transubstantiation." (Letters to Calvinists). "There are indications of this prediction now being verified; for in every view of the subject the Incarnation of God is not less absurd and ridiculous than the impanation of God, or God in a bit of bread! Nay, the Scripture proofs are incomparably stronger for the latter than the former." (Theol. Doubts).—Yours, &c.,

LAYMAN.

COMMUNICATION FROM AUCKLAND, N.Z.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

Auckland, N.Z., June, 1876.

SIR,—Having now considerable experience by investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism, I am thoroughly convinced of the reality of Spirit Communications and of Spiritual Laws by which those communications are an established fact.

A young man, Mr. D., and myself, commenced to investigate last December, and continued for three months sitting at a small table in a private room twice a week, two hours each time, and by following the instructions given to us by Mr. Dawse we received the following communications, viz.:—

The presiding spirit gave the name H. D. in full, mother of Mr. D., who left for spirit home 17 years ago. She several times enquired about his health, and of his brother, who lives about 100 miles from here. We asked for tests, and she reminded him of many youthful incidents which he had altogether forgotten, and told him of his sister now happy with her mother in their spirit home, and that he had several guardian spirits within him. She also told me that I had several guardian spirits, and gave the names of ten or more who are all in the spirit home, some in higher and purer spheres than others, that my father (now over 40 years gone to his rest) wished to communicate with me. I then asked for the communication, and he told me about many interesting affairs in business and theology which I have no reason to doubt. I also had interesting communications from two sisters and a maternal uncle as tests quite correct, and we also had many written messages by our good spirit friends, and having such control of us, being mediumistic and clairvoyant, would entrance us, but we declined. We asked for spirit lights, and lights appeared on our hands. We asked for some material to be laid on the table. After trying they told us that the material power from us was not sufficient. We asked many theological and scientific questions. Some were answered, but our good spirit said that it was not in her power to answer all, and told us that she had seen many of the spirit leaders of religious associations. We then asked if the Rev. J. Wesley, founder of the Wesleyan Church, could or would come and give us instructions on some of the leading doctrines of the Christian religion. She promised to try. In a a few days after, as Mr. D. took pencil and paper, his good spirit-mother wrote by his hand, amongst other messages—"Tell Mr. P. that Mr. Wesley will be here to-night," and that night the Venerable Wesley was with us, and gave his name, John Wesley. We then invoked him to give us truth and righteousness. He told us that this earth was inhabited more than a million of years, that man was born with an immortal spirit which can never be annihilated, but continually progresses in knowledge and love, and that the human family would progress more than another million of years on this earth, that the expectations of a millenium were illusive, and yet that the human family would progress more in Spiritualism when Spiritual laws will be better developed, and that there were no personal devil nor everlasting torments, neither a Trinity of Gods as taught in the Christian Churches, and yet that spirits suffer in consequence of sin and transgression and misspent lives on earth. He also told us that the Christian Bible was greatly corrupted, and asked if they were altering it, and said that the Christian religion was greatly corrupted, that himself while on earth taught some false doctrines, and although he was happy, yet that his peace would have been much more had he not taught those false doctrines while on earth, that there were no spirits dead in trespass and sin, that the merits or demerits of Jesus or any other sacrifice of man could never procure immortal happiness without ourselves progressing in well doing, and that other planets in the different solar systems were not dissimilar, having laws and order to observe of which they are transgressors, and thus there are millions of beings in millions of worlds progressing to immortal happiness, some of which he saw in the spirit home, as also spirits of every clime and country here. He said that systems are continually resolving and dissolving through eternal ages, perpetually producing new life and progress, that the gross body does not rise from earth, and that the bodies of Jesus, Enoch and Elias did not nor never will rise, that all remain in the elements of this sphere, and that there were many spheres to which spirits progress, that the spirit is conscious in a few seconds after leaving the earthly body, &c. My health not being good, I asked advice, and was told to discontinue smoking, that I should wean myself by a little each day for thirty days, that there should be no ill effects. I took the advice, and I am happy to say that my health is much improved. I asked why it was that I have been so dreamy and impressional, while Mr. D., being mediumistic, was not. Answer—You are more somnambulistic and clairvoyant. Wesley came four evenings, and gave us many answers, and on retiring our good spirits always bid us good night. On all those occasions we had communications with happy spirits, except one evening, when we had a spirit who said that he was in misery. On sitting at our table we remarked a change by its movements and giving uncertain replies. However, invoking the presiding spirit in the name of the Supreme Living God to give us truth, immediately "William George" was given, and declined to give his surname. He said that he was a native of Wales, near Conway and left about five years ago after a life of robbery and violence, and that we could do nothing for him except to pray for him. We then asked if he was a Roman Catholic when on earth. A.—No. Q.—Any religion. A.—No. Well Mr. D. and I were not taught to pray for departed spirits by our religious professions but will comply with your request. We prayed for him and advised him to strive to progress in the love and knowledge of the gracious God. He then bid us good night, and left us more grateful. He communicated a little in the Welsh language, which we did not then understand. At our next sitting our good

spirits told us that they did not send a dark spirit, but that the Supreme permitted him to come, and that we did him good, and having a love for all who strive to make truth manifest we send you this abridged account of our short investigation, hoping that it may encourage others under more favorable circumstances to continue in the unfolding of those gracious laws by which God's love is made manifest.

I am, dear sir, most faithfully, &c.,

T. G. P.

SUICIDES.

Dear Harbinger.—At a recent sitting of one of our circles, the subject of suicide was suggested to us by an eminent spirit, who in this life held a Professorship (anatomical) in Edinbro', he stated that he witnessed the rash suicide of the young man Thompson at Hawthorn, and depicted his miserable entrance into the spheres, in fact on two occasions has he alluded to this subject. Now this gives Spiritualists an opportunity to remove an error from the minds of some who imagine that by severing forcibly the ties which bind them to this earth, they at once are removed from troubles here to peace beyond. A little reflection will convince even the most ignorant of the fallacy of such reasoning. At our birth we are placed upon this earth in our first sphere, to mature by natural laws of development until ripe and ready for the second change—so that it becomes apparent that any violation of the grand design brings in its train confusion—the poor sufferer finds on his entrance into the second sphere, that he cannot at once undo the wrong committed—he or she haunted by remorse with mind for accuser sees little hope of escape I have frequently heard people heedlessly talk of the value of human life, when by a simple act they can at once be in Elysium—they defend their position by the teachings of spirits, who describe the happiness of the next state of existence, but let them once have the confessions of a suicide, and then, how few would contemplate the crime of laying violent hands upon their own sacred life. Suicide appears under various forms—such as drunkenness, vicious habits, drugs, &c., in addition to sudden destruction, all of which entails future suffering.

JOHN VEEVERS.

June 26, 1876.
7 Raleigh Street,
Windsor.

DEATH OF MR. T. C. TERRY.

Last month we recorded the death of one of our prominent local spiritualists, since then another has passed on; one of the pioneers of spiritualism in Melbourne, and father of the editor of this journal, who on the 10th of June shook off his frail and worn out body and ascended to the spirit land.

Mr. Thomas Charles Terry, was born in London, in March 1800, and was for many years engaged in that city in the provision trade, and subsequently manager to the Wood Paving Company. He emigrated to Victoria in 1853, and was for some years partner in the drapery firm of Terry and Bamford, but for the last ten years has resided with and assisted his younger son. Mr. T. C. Terry who was formerly a disciple of W. J. Fox, the celebrated liberal Unitarian and M.P. for Oldham, began the investigation of spiritualism in 1859, and attended a circle at Dr. Berigny's, in Collins-street, subsequently joining with his son and a friend in a private investigation, at which conviction of the fact of spirit intercourse was obtained. Since that time he has been a quiet but diligent advocate of Spiritualism, encouraging the formation of circles, giving information to inquirers, importing and loaning books on the subject before they were otherwise procurable here, and encouraging the diffusion of Rational Spiritualism to the best of his ability. His faculties of speech, hearing and sight had been for some time failing, but it was not till within a few weeks of his departure that the system showed signs of breaking up, dissolution then rapidly set in and it became apparent to his friends that his stay here would not be long. With the view of ensuring the loving care and attention that his condition demanded, he was removed to the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. H. Bamford, of Castlemaine, where he was carefully tended by his daughter until the time of his death. Though the struggle between the body and spirit during the last few days of his earthly life, produced a physical restlessness, his spiritual condition was a happy one, he expressed his desire to "go home," and had perfect confidence in the nature of that home. On Sunday evening he expressed a wish for some music, and a few spiritual hymns and songs were sung, which appeared to give him much pleasure, after which a communication was written, through the hand of Mr. Bamford, signed by several spirit friends and relatives, conveying words of love and encouragement, and telling him they were waiting for him to usher him into the new and brighter life, this he appeared fully to realise. About 2 p.m. on Monday, he called his friends to his bedside, and bidding them good bye, told them he had seen his late earthly partner (who had preceded him many years), and that he was now "going home," and in about two hours after, his spirit quietly passed away. The funeral which took place on Wednesday the 12th, was conducted in accordance with what was known to be his desire. There was an absence of the usual insignia of mourning, no black clothes, crape or hat bands, but in their stead, evergreens and sweet flowers were lain on the coffin, and carried in the hands of the friends who followed. The funeral procession which consisted of a hearse, coach, and four or five other vehicles, left Mr. Bamford's at about 11 a.m., and proceeded to the Campbell's Creek Cemetery. The coffin being placed over the grave, Mr. G. C. Leech gave out the following hymn, which was feelingly sang by the friends :—

Death is the fading of a cloud,
The breaking of a chain ;
The rending of a mortal shroud
We ne'er shall see again.

Death is the close of life's alarms,
The watch-light on the shore ;
The clasping in immortal arms
Of loved ones gone before.

Death is the conqueror's welcome home,
The heavenly city's door,
The entrance of the world to come,
'Tis life for evermore.

Death is the mighty second birth,
The unveiling of the soul ;
'Tis freedom from the chains of earth,
The pilgrim's heavenly goal.

Death is a song from seraph lips,
The day-spring from on high ;
The ending of the soul's eclipse,
Its transit of the sky.

At the close of the hymn Mr. Leech delivered a very appropriate address, describing the transitions of the physical as well as the spiritual, and the naturalness and beauty of the change called death, speaking of the departed as one of the pioneers of a still unpopular movement, who had adhered to its principles and borne the stigma when it was more unpopular, he eulogised his private character as a man and a citizen, and commended his unceasing endeavours in the cause of truth. The following hymn was then sang :—

There is no death ! the stars go down,
To rise upon some fairer shore ;
And bright, in Heaven's jewelled crown,
They shine for evermore.

There is no death ! the dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

The granite rocks disorganize
To feed the hungry moss they bear,
The forest leaves drink daily life
From out the viewless air.

There is no death ! the leaves may fall,
The flowers may fade, birds cease to sing ;
They only wait, through wintry hours,
The coming of the spring.

Flowers and evergreens were showered on the coffin by sympathising friends, and the assembly dispersed.

THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUALISM.
(*Contiuued.*)

If then Spiritualism be admitted (as surely it *must*) to be both Possible and Probable, or these failing, the next step is—the Proved. For if we deny its Possibility we merely affirm our mental inability to grasp the formula, if we reject its Probability, we state its disagreement with the tenor of our experience.

But as neither Ability nor Experience, can lay claim to Infallibility, or the inclusion of all Truth, we may even in their opposition, as we necessarily do in their concurrence, appeal to the final test, that includes and exceeds them—the test of positive knowledge or Science.

The word, "Science," signifies accumulated, or as Spencer puts it, partially unified Knowledge, and the Doctrine of Spiritualism we defined to be—The Continued Existence of the Individual after Death, and its Communication and Manifestation to us. It, therefore, devolves upon us to consider, if such an organised body of Knowledge, unfolds and supports the Doctrine. The first question arising thence being—

I. The Nature of Proof

That upon which all Sciences are based is, *The Testimony of Sense substantiated by the verdict of Reason*, or as Mr Lewes expresses it, "Facts, and Inferences from Facts," between which we must carefully distinguish. The Science of Spiritualism consists of two Classes of Facts,

1. Phenomenal.
2. Rational.

The first, such as Levitations, and Materialisations, appealing more particularly to the senses; the second, as Apparitions, and Revelations, more particularly to the Mind—and to two classes of Inferences establishing

I. Negatively or Exhaustively.
II. Positively.

Its interpretations and inductions therefrom.

Now though all Sciences are organised branches of Knowledge, they differ widely among themselves, as to their Nature and Manner of their proof. In proportion as their subjects are more or less external, and more or less, easily perceptible to the senses, are they more or less easily understood, and removed from Error; for these reasons Geology and Mathematics, are simpler than Pyschology and Physics; while the differences of method and matter are palpably represented in them. These numerous facts which are included under the head of Spiritualism, do not form a separate or pure Science, on the contrary, they trench upon the Spheres of many. Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Physiology, and Physchology, are brought under contribution, while there is still an essence more Metaphysical and Transcendental than all, which under the name of Spiritology, we shall review in due order. Spiritualism, is in reality, a great ocean of Fact, touching every shore of Science, and without a knowledge of which, all Science is more or less defective. It draws its proofs from all, and by the same means proves its right of admission to its place in Human Belief. These means are Evidence and Reason. Evidence of the Facts, Reasons of the Inferences. And here another question presents itself which though not cardinal, is yet advanced by carping antagonists seeking to evade Truth.

II. The Value of Evidence.

It is a strange circumstance that the Ultra-Sceptical Philosophy of Hume, is revived by those, who in all other instances, deny and deride it, as a final weapon of attack against the facts of Spiritualism—they seek, in this case only, to invalidate Reason, as the Catholics imprison it, by an Act of Reason itself—they also agree that such occurrences are impossible, because we have had no experience of them; and can have had no experience of them; because they are impossible —What they cannot explain, or impeach, they deny, and what they dare not deny, they disregard. Mr Wallace has thoroughly exposed the miserable artifices of these unscrupulous Writers, who assail Spiritualism alone, with arguments that apply equally well to all other Sciences, and indeed to all Truth; but we are content to let it take its true place, beside Mathematics, and Physics, to stand or fall with them. The Testimony of Sense, substantiated by the Verdict of Reason, this we have undeniably and no Law of Nature can have more.

Driven from this utterly untenable position, understood only to be discarded, they next entrench themselves in other subterfuges of which one of the first is

III. The Value of Authority.

Though even on the ground of Authority Spiritualism stands firm, yet it is contrary to its Nature to rely upon such external adjuncts, as well as foreign to it inasmuch as it is often unneeded. Let it be granted that the judgment of Specialists, upon their specialities, other things equal, is superior to that of the generality, yet it is at once apparent that the main body of its Rational, as well as a large proportion of its Phenomenal facts, do not lie in such limited domains, but rather in that general sphere of experience, which is common to all cultivated mankind. While if in certain particulars, Specialists lay claim to infallibility, we can point them to an unceasing resistance on their part to many of the greatest discoveries in these very directions; discoveries often by those outside the professional pale. The Undulatory Theory of Light, and numerous instances in Medical History at once present themselves as illustrative of these facts. and we would do well to recollect those innumerable, though universal errors, which have at times controlled the scientific world unquestioned for a generation, and point to the almost forgotten theories of Wolff, Hegel, and Liebnitz, as an instance. We should remember that scientists are but men, and often under the dominion of a religious intolerence, and a political or social conservatism which do much to depreciate the value of their labors. The mere Knowledge of Science, like the merely memorial portions of Law, or the mechanical occupations of the manufacturer, does little towards developing anything but a special organ or two of the brain, and even in the widest and most original minds, leaves large tracts of thought and experience, barren and unexplored. An array of letters or titles is no certain passport to Wisdom, and in the all important, the apex quality of the human mind—that which controls its dealings with its fellow man, in Morals, there is no closer relationship to Science, than to Religion. Here they stand on the same level as the rest of Civilisation, and examples of their lack of Honesty, Courage, and Truthfulness, lead us to the sad conviction, that the level is a low one. Far be it from any of these thoughts, to cast a stigma upon Science, but as before insisted Scientific Men are not Science, any more than Religious Devotees are Religion Both, and all, have erred, do err, and will err, authority has its value but it bows to Reason.

Authority under right conditions is a great power, and these not conditions of Faith, but of Reason, granted a due amount of Tolerance, Time, and Trial, and the verdict of a Specialist is of the greatest weight, And this which is a necessity, premised Spiritualism shows no blot on its escutcheon, but only wreaths of Triumph. For every man of Science, or repute, who has investigated the subject thus, has seen its Truth, or in popular phraseology become a Convert. It is not here the place to ring the changes on their names, at present, a weakness of Spiritualistic writers, who allow their partially just pride to overstep their judgment; suffice it to state, that Six of the Chief Universities of Europe, have in their professorial Chairs avowed Spiritualists,—that there is no Profession, Class, or Nation, which has not given its quota of believers; a belief, in the vast majority of cases, founded upon personal, often upon private, experince, of a nature so irrefutable, that it is irresistible by the strongest prejudice. No Science, but of its chief devotees might be named a Spiritualist's; no Reform but in its formost ranks often among its founders, is a Spiritualist; No Creed but has surrendered some who left the Old for the New, having kept their lamps burning, were welcomed by the Bridegroom Truth.

IV. The Personal Equation.

This is one of the most important factors in the consideration of Evidence, more particularly with respect to Spiritualism, which without its aberrations be allowed for, must present a blurred and distorted presence to the observer. To the investigator often a complete obstacle, to the believer a dangerous snare. In the higher

manifestations the machinery is of so delicate a texture, that the slightest individual element is a hindrance, and if powerful a deceit. We are then for the time lifted above the control of Matter, into the World of Mind, where Thoughts and Feelings are the mightiest agencies, capable of producing the most beneficial or disastrous results. The Spirit necessary, for the complete and perfect reception of advanced Truths, is one perfectly impersonal, in which self is thrust under foot. It is not necessarily of Faith, but is more correctly described by the word Harmony. A Circle should be as far as possible of almost the same mental and moral status, for then their Faith will be approximately the same, and teachings may be given which will fall favorably upon all ears. For if the developments be irregular, or antagonistic, mental agitation and repulsion, follow from some, the Faith is not the same, the Harmony is destroyed, and the inspiration comes bearing the marks of the tempest through which it has passed. All this is true in a minor degree of the lower, or physical manifestations, but for the comprehension of these Truths, and their necessity, an advanced intelligence is necessary. To the average Investigator, Thoughts are, like Spirits, purely ideal, and all but non-existent, and he cannot grasp the magnitude of their influence, till after long experience, when the same difficulty besets and destroys his Belief. As Mr Wallace says of his early investigations, he had then no place in his mental fabric for the reception of such ideas, and it was only after long education, by a study of the facts, that he could appreciate or receive them. This points to a Law entirely disregarded by Sceptics, who tutored for long years by the Tangible only, hope to leap to an apprehension of the Imperceptible, and its relations, at one bound. This is a manifest impossibility to those acquainted with physiological Psychology, and it should be reiterated to all, that only in cases of personal susceptibility to Spiritual Impression, found sometimes among the religious, or in the power of abstract thought, and conception, found in Poets, and some Scientific men, can any receive at once, or, in a short time, Spiritual Truths, *i.e.*, those dealing with the Imperceptible. For these reasons the Sciences, in their crude form, are rather a barrier than otherwise, and from these, and collateral consideration, is the personal Equation still more to be dreaded. The extent of its influence may be sparsely estimated, by referring to the facts before stated that Spiritualism, draws upon every Rank, Race, Class, and Creed, for its believers, who, more or less retain the impress of their former conditions. There are also some who undoubtedly are beyond conviction, in such matters, as the conformation of their Brains forbids it, and puts it beyond proof. The effect upon others of these minds, may be estimated by our former relation of the necessities of a Circle; Harmony, and consequent Faith, not forgetting, however, that there is a personal equation of a harmonious Circle, which is or should be in all essentials as an individual, and which equation must be also allowed for in assessing its results. But all Inquirers must rationally expect to undergo varying periods of probation, before the proof is reached, and it requires a certain amount of previous conviction, to prompt the, to others, doubtful utility of such an undertaking. The Arrogance with which the multitude limit the existences contained in the Illimitable, to those perceived by their acknowledgedly imperfect senses, is an egotism so common as not to provoke comment, and as even to pass for Science. "Science" Comte tells us "deals only with phenomena"—*certain* phenomena he might better have said, for it is ignorant as yet of the Spiritual, which in their turn promise to unfold, for the first time, the Causes which the great Positivist was compelled to forego. Spiritualism contains the beginning and end of Evolution, which without it, is a broken arch whose pillars are unseen, a Rainbow, whose mighty sweep save a small central bar, is hidden by thick clouds of Ignorance. To the study of the Violin seven years, to a Trade often five, to the Science of the Stars, or the Sod, to the race for Gold, or Power, a Lifetime, but to the Science of Sciences, of Immortality and Eternity, —a few spare hours, a few scant thoughts, a few poor phrases; sought without effort, judged without evidence, condemned without understanding.

V. The Value of Conditions.

The Astromoner, measuring distances and powers, is careful to estimate individual weakness, his personal equation, and to deduct it from results, but the personality infused into his figures is infinitesimal, compared with that which wakes the torrent of Emotion too often to drown the Intellect, when holding communion with the loved and lost. To prepare for the long vigils which, when others sleep, must see his glance tracing the distant suns, by rest and food is a palpable necessity, but to prepare for that other watch, while others lie in intellectual slumber, there is needed severer struggles, the domination of unjust desires, of fleshy passions, of intellectual errors, and moral failings—this is a more bitter purge. And yet without it there is no certainty or continued success—with it, there is no Infallibility. The Miscroscopist does not study while his eyes are, wet, nor the Chemist when his brain wanders, nor the Physicist when his hand shakes, nor do they conduct their most refined researches in the noisy streets, or with defiled instruments. For some Light, for others Darkness, is necessary, but for all there are certain elements required, without which the design is futile, and certain *Conditions* of these, without which all is folly. And yet the opponents of Spiritualism, would refuse or depreciate Conditions, and casting all experience behind them, let assumption take its place. Forgetting that Heat and Cold, Light and Darkness, Electricity, Magnetism, Life and Death, are but Conditions, and what mightier features can there be—the Children of the Seen would be Fathers of the Unseen, upon which it floats like a straw; the slaves of the atom and its vibrations, would be Kings over Soul; Science should yield to their Pride, which would dictate to God what Nature denies them.

VI. The Value of Reason.

The last stronghold of Scepticism, to which it finally retreats, in which its last hope lies, consists in having granted the facts, to deny the power of the Reason to connect them with Spirits of the departed. Against these first, we have to bring forward our two Classes of Inferences—the first consists in proving Negatively, or Exhaustively, that no other theory can explain them, and to this (taking the latest utterances of the school through Mrs. Denton) they are compelled to agree. Their Position stated plainly is, that no possible amount of evidence could prove the Theory they decline to proceed beyond facts, to countenance any inference drawn from them. In reply it is to be stated, that if we carefully examine the great majority of what are termed facts, it will be seen that they possess more or less inference connected with them. As shown in a previous paper, the Testimony of Sense requires continual correction, and what we term Facts, are really elaborated results of many such, are in short Inferences, and that many of the most ordinary so called facts of daily Life, may be resolved into these on close scrutiny. Thus the statement that the Earth revolves around the Sun, is an inference from facts, and the seeming fact that the Sun revolves around the Earth, is untrue. The answering arguments can only be outlined here, but it is apparent upon consideration, that really bare facts, without any inferences, are rare, and unimportant, often false, that there is an ascending scale of abstraction, extending from the simplest cognition, to the most extended, and it is utterly impossible to draw any line where the process can, or should cease. In the next place many pure inferences are of our highest possible degree of certainty —thus it is merely an inference, that the Sun will rise to-morrow, or that Fire will burn, or Ice chill, yet what stranger attestation could we have than these proverbial certainties.

Again in the second class of Inferences, those which demonstrate Spiritualism Positively, we have an array of Evidence, as powerful, complete, as can be brought forward in support of our most material experiences or beliefs. The evidence of a Force, of a guiding Intelligence, of its Individuality, and its agreement in all particulars with some other Individuality, called dead, form a chain

of proof which has been successfully followed in hundreds of cases, and is in perpetual confirmation in a thousand homes. No more exact proof is possible in any Science, nor is it needed here.

VII. The Summary.

Finally then, Spiritualism claims and offers the same positive proofs upon which all our Science and Knowledge are founded. In these departments where Science is supreme, it has already been vindicated by Authority, and in that large domain where the Scientist, possesses little if any further ability, than his fellow, it rests upon the irrefragible evidence of millions. The Conditions which it requires are the common necessities of experimental Sciences, while they offer no obstacle to perfect proof. It is based upon Inferences as decisive, and as complete as those of Physiology and Astronomy, explicable by no other theory, and progresses by regular stages until it reaches absolute human certitude. For its Investigation are needed preparation in Mind and Body; its Comprehension is reached only after a long course of study, and retained only by the continued exercise of Reason. Some Truths are small enough to obtain admission into average minds uninjured and untainted—others require the highest class of intellect to grasp them. But a full conception of the Universe is possible to none. Spiritualism is of the Infinite, and while it fills all Minds to the full, gives them but a fraction of its Light, which rolls through the Immensity of Time and Space. Protean in its shapes, Herculean in its powers, it possesses such riches, that it satisfies all in their own Desires; separately none see it alike, all see but parts and often different ones. It developes the highest Natures independently. At the same time it is a Whole,a Majestic and Perfect Truth, which in every aspect is ennobling and sublime—without it the Universe is barren, with it we know "The Bosom of our Father and our God."

THE LYCEUM.

The Lyceum Sessions have been well attended lately, and the general *esprit* of the members excellent. The exercise of the intuitive and reasoning faculties of the youthful members is bringing forth good fruit. We append two recent answers to questions, both given by young ladies of 15, as specimens of many equally good, the question being—What is true and false faith?

If I were a Christian I should say that "True Faith" was the substance of things hoped for," &c.,—a firm and irrevocable belief in the tenet so graciously propounded by our "Orthodox" Church. But as I am an "Infidel" I indignantly discard the "faith" of the so-called Orthodox, and turn to a more rational faith—one that the philosophy of Spiritualism endorses. Faith in an Infinite and Divine mind or soul that pervades the illimitable universe, which it regulates with unerring precision, Faith in the salvation of every human being, and of necessity in the immortality of the soul. Faith in the progression of that soul upon the plan of eternal existence. Faith in the intercourse with ourselves (under certain conditions) of those who have preceded us to the ethereal regions. Faith in the ultimate happiness of the most depraved of immortal creation. &c.

What is False Faith?

'Tis needless to dilate upon this topic. A cursory glance at the multifarious tenets held by the multiplicity of the Christian sects will suffice to illustrate what is the nature of false faith—a faith which endorses whatever is prefaced with "Thus saith the Lord.' The old lady who when asked if she believed that Jonah was swallowed by the whale, replied, "Believe it certainly, isn't it told us so in the Bible; if the Holy Book had said that Jonah had swallowed the whale I should have believed it," is a good illustration of what is "False Faith,"—a faith debasing to ourselves and stigmatising our Creator,

Jane Dalrymple.

Faith is truth or sincerity, There is no false faith. If it is faith it must be true. We may have faith in a false thing as well as in a true, but the faith is always true. For instance, we may have great faith or confidence in a person who has turned out to be untruthful and dishonest, but the faith is not untrue, it is the person. Faith may be broken, but it was never false, while you believed in the thing it was the object which you believed in. So long as the faith remains it must be true, or it is not faith at all.

2nd July, 1876. Beatrice Bonney.

FREE THOUGHTS ON THE LIFE OF JESUS.

By a Writing Medium.

Chapter I.

(Continued.)

Gladly, however, do we turn to the other side of the question, and endeavour to point out that there is a basis; a sound and reasonable basis on which to build a belief in the reality of ancient historic personages, and among these, that of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christus of Syria, and the patron saint of those, who departing from the Paganism of Rome, sought a new and a better form of religion. Were it not the case that we could reasonably prove the existence of Jesus as a real personage, then must it also be admitted, that no such persons as any of the more ancient Seers ever had a personality on the earth. But with this we are not so much concerned as the fact, that Jesus of Nazareth was a real person; and that he lived in Judea some 1900 years ago, and after accomplishing much good among his contemporaries, suffered persecution, from which he was rescued as some would affirm by a miracle, died a peaceful death, was translated to the spirit home, and has left behind him an impress on the human mind, which has been a prominent feature of the eighteen centuries past, and probably calculated in another form, to continue to aid human progression for generations yet to come.

A writer points out that, in connection with recent discoveries in Rome and elsewhere, the most reliable evidence is furnished of the truth, that Jesus lived as is declared in Palestine; and this evidence, taken in conjunction with the admitted testimony of writers who lived shortly after the translation of Jesus, affords a very satisfactory evidence of the truth of our affirmation. Modern writers, also, who have carefully sifted the evidences both for and against the assumption, that Jesus was a *real person*, have arrived at the same conclusion; and it is much to say in its favour that probably some of these writers, would gladly have declared, if they could honestly have done so, in the negative, rather than in the affirmative. Added to this, we offer a testimony, which although it will be rejected, doubtless, by some of our readers as worthless, will be accepted by others, as possessing in the light of modern revelations a value of no ordinary character. In testimony that Jesus was a real person, we point out that the revelations of Modern Spiritualism, afford evidence of the present existence of Jesus, as well as that of other ancient historic characters; leading to conclusion, that not only they, but he also, had once an earthly history. It is said by what is believed to be a highly intelligent spirit control: that Jesus has been seen in the heavenly world companioned with Confucius, Pythagoras, Plato, and other Holy Intelligences who shone in the twilight of the earlier ages; and, whose names grace the pages of history. And we may add, for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with modern spiritual literature, that many other living Seers, Clairvoyants, and Spirit Intelligences testify to the same fact.

Now, viewing the subject in this light, an interest is created in the mind relative to this once denizen of our earth; and there arises a much greater desire to ascertain if possible, what may be known relative to his life, his teachings, and the manner of his leaving this world of materiality, to enter upon the, at present to us, unseen location of departed spirits, and with this, to trace in bold and truthful lines, the influence, if any, which may be derived from a careful consideration of the entire subject.

Great stress has been laid by ecclesiastical historians, on the antecedent allusions, and what are called prophecies of Jesus, years before he was born. But to these prenatal references, we attach little, or no importance.

It would not be difficult, if that were our object, in making it apparent that these so-called prophecies of Isaiah, and other old Testament writers, had no reference whatever to Jesus of Nazareth; although, they may have had such a reference to an expected Deliverer, commonly called the Messiah. Neither does it prove anything in favour of this theory, that certain passages from the prophets of the Old Testament, have been engrafted into the Christian Records; and then said by commentators, to be pregnant with meaning. The coincidence thus pointed out, is only imaginary, and will not bear the test of severe critical examination, more especially in the light of increasing knowledge on such subjects, which now prevails.

It is for this reason, that we discard all assistance which such references might afford, in the delineation of the life of Jesus; and however much we may admire, in their proper place, the inspired utterances of a Psalmist, an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, or a Daniel, we value them not when torn from their proper sphere, and made to do service in the building up of a fiction which is only calculated to mislead.

As we have remarked, we are borne out in this view of the less than doubtful value of the prenatal allusions, by writers of intelligence and research of the present day, who have given their attention to this aspect of the subject. One of these writers remarks:—"There is no portion of the sacred writings over which hangs a veil of such dim obscurity, or regarding the meaning of which such hopeless discrepancies have prevailed among Christian Divines, as the Prophetical Books of the Hebrew Canon. The difficulties to which the English reader is exposed by the extreme defects of the received translation, its confused order and erroneous divisions, are at present nearly insuperable. No Chronology is observed and the earlier, and the later, the genuine, and the spurious, are mixed together; and sometimes the prophecies of two individuals of different epochs are given us under the same name. In the case of some of the more important of them, we are in doubt as to the date, the author, and the interpretation, and on the question whether the predictions related exclusively to Jewish, or to general history, to Cyrus, or to Jesus, to Zerubbabel, or to Christ, to Antiochus Epiphanes, to Titus, or to Napoleon, to events long past, or to events still in the remote future; the most conflicting opinions have been held with equal confidence by men of equal learning. There is no department of theology in which divines have so universally *assumed* their conclusions, and *modified* their premises to suit them as in this." (Greg's Creed of Christendom, vol., 1 p. 72.)

We forbear at present, any further quotations, as in subsequent portions of our work, we shall have occasion to allude to opinions of a similar character. Our readers will very easily perceive, how readily we may be misled at the outset of an inquiry such as this, did we, without questioning the propriety and value of such a proceeding, adopt as valid, the so called allusions to Jesus in the Old Testament. With many writers, who insist on the supernatural character of Jesus, and the exclusively divine nature of his work, such an application of Old Testament utterances has seemed to be a necessity; and having been once adopted, and receiving the stamp of an infallible dogmatism, to depart from such a belief has been characterized as rank infidelity; and against all objectors, however much they may show the relevancy of their arguments, is hurled anathema of the most horrible character. We can afford, however, to leave these positivists to their own fierce delights of denouncing all who dare to differ from them, and by this means, gain a greater freedom of investigation.

We now enter upon an aspect of our subject which has been surrounded with a mystery calculated to shut out all possibility, of arriving at any rational view of the truth respecting the parentage of Jesus. Those who confine themselves to the New Testament Records, are bound to the belief, that Jesus had no earthly father. And, this, we may say, is another false step in the attempt to delineate the life of Jesus.

It is a remarkable fact, that not Jesus alone, but numerous other historical personages, who through a variety of circumstances have been raised in the estimation of their fellow men, have received at their hands the honour of a supernatural origin. History tells us of personages, both before and after Jesus, who have been thus deified; so, that, were this declaration respecting Jesus true, the same thing must be admitted in the case of the other claimants; and, then, what becomes of the exclusiveness which is demanded for Jesus, as the only begotten Son of God? It will be found on examination, that this dogma of the Church, like many others, is entirely without foundation; and that not even the Evangelistic Records give any colouring thereto, but rather contradict it. And, indeed, it is quite unnecessary for the establishment of a valid basis, on which to rest the character of Jesus as a Teacher, and the brother of Man; for if he be God, then what becomes of his brotherhood; and farewell to that bond of sympathy by which one so estimable, is bound to humanity, and, from which springs any value that such union may possess. Regard Jesus in the natural light which a rejection of the dogma of his supernatural conception involves, and then, the course is clear, to trace his life as the life of any other historic personage is traced. It is only by utterly ignoring the action of our reason, that the supernatural conception of Jesus in the womb of a Virgin can be accepted; and if that be necessary in this instance, who can tell, but we shall end by ignoring the operation of our reasoning faculties altogether; and then, good-bye to intelligent apprehension of any fact connected with our existence.

The *Parentage of Jesus*, must of necessity, be involved in some sort of obscurity. That he was born in Nazareth, seems to be generally accepted by all but those who confine themselves to the Evangelistic Records. One of the most accomplished compilers of the life of Jesus, says:—"All his life Jesus was designated by the name of the Nazarene, and it is only by a rather embarrassed and round-about way, that in the legends respecting him, he is made to be born at Bethlehem. . . . . The precise date of his birth is unknown. It took place under the reign of Augustus, about the Roman year 750, probably some years before the year 1 of that era which all civilized people date from the day which he was born." (Renan, p. 46).

In the village of Nazareth, then, Jesus first opened his eyes on the scenes of human life. It need not be disputed that his Mother's name was Mary; or, that his Father's name was Joseph, and that they were inhabitants of that quiet and obscure village. What occupation the father may have followed is of very little consequence, although, if any reliance can be placed on some portions of the Evangelistic Record he was a carpenter, probably a maker of agricultural implements, and, by this means, sustained his family in the usual humble condition which pertained to the lot of such persons.

A far greater interest attaches to the question of the *early life* of Jesus, than as to what occupation his father followed. Born in Nazareth, and of parents whose limited means would not permit of their roaming about the country, it is probable that Jesus was reared in that village, and acquired the elements of learning common to persons in such a position from the reader in the Synagogue, who was invariably the schoolmaster in the small Jewish towns.

It has been suggested, that the parents were in some degree connected with the Society of the Essenes, and that Jesus in after years, also became a member of that fraternity. Be this as it may, it seems pretty certain that the youthful training of Jesus, was of the purest, as well as of the simplest character. From his mother's breast, he may have imbibed the elements of a nourishment calculated to foster the goodness of a nature derived from a worthy sire; and, under the influence of that simple home circle, combined with a guardianship of a higher order, the infant, the child, the youth, grew up to find himself possessed of educated faculties, such as would render him useful in his day and generation.

Treating of the Parentage and Birthplace of Jesus, we are constrained to remark upon the contradictory character of the information given in the Evangelistic narratives concerning these matters. We are told, that

Jesus had no earthly Father, and, again, we are informed that he was the Son of Joseph, It is also declared, that he was born at Bethlehem ; and almost in the same connection, and as a rule throughout the entire history, he is declared to be of Nazareth : and, this, in such a way, that the inference over and over again must necessarily be, that Nazareth, and not Bethlehem, was the place of his birth. His affirmed birth in Bethlehem, like the account of the heavenly hosts appearing to the Shepherds, the visit of the wise men, and his journey into Egypt, may be classed, we think, among the prettily constructed myths used to invest the character of Jesus in after times with undue importance. But at this we are not surprised, for even at the present day, writers exist, who present for the delectation of their readers, the most far fetched and romantic imaginings as facts in the history of Jesus. It is from this cause, that so little has been realized of the probable events of his life; and, the true lessons which that life is calculated to teach have been lost altogether, and in their place, dogmas substituted, which have had the effect of filling the world with violence, misery, and death !

The question, however, arises: is it possible at all to arrive at any satisfactory estimation of what the real character of his early history may have been? Granting that almost insuperable difficulties lie in our way, we think that at any rate, an ideal may be constructed as nearly approaching the truth as it is possible to attain. Following out the plan with which we started, that a greater freedom of thought may be used than is usual, and regulating the adoption of attainable facts by the exercise of an educated reason, we trust to succeed in the object before us.

The *Youth of Jesus*, must have been passed amid considerable quietude, and most likely devoid of personal excitement, at any rate, until his twelfth year, when he would accompany his parents to Jerusalem, to the celebration of the passover. But how were those twelve years filled up, and at how early a period of his childhood did he begin to manifest a disposition for more serious thought? The answer to these questions will depend on several things; disposition, conduct of parents, influence of surroundings, and means possessed to improve the mind, and excite thoughts which would give birth to future purposes.

If, as we suggested, it was true that his parents were connected indirectly with the sect of the Essenes, there would flow, as a matter of course, around him, a stream of influence calculated to foster notions such as were developed in his future days. In the doctrine of the one God, the brotherhood of man, with many other notions prevalent at the time, and probably the peculiar teachings set forth in the *Book of Enoch*, a book much in vogue, and highly regarded by the Jews, but full of mystic utterances; under the influence of such teachings, his youth would be spent. And thus the seeds of thought would be sown, not to appear at once, but after many days to spring up, and assume a shape peculiar to the disposition and personality of Jesus.

We are not inclined to think that for a considerable time, any notion would be formed in the mind of Jesus, that he was to assume a more than ordinarily prominent position among his countrymen. In character he was, we think, what is termed precocious, and inherited from a spiritually-minded mother the disposition rather to follow the life of a wandering teacher, than to adopt the trade of his father. And in this, he was doubtless strengthened by an occasional, or more frequent companionship with men, who had become alive to the many abuses which existed in the prevalence of priestcraft and pharisaism, rampant at that time. He may also, have heard during his childhood and youth, many statements of the lax state of morals, and the evident departure which prevailed from the spirit of the national religion; and, in his young mind, unconsciously to himself, there may have been formed purposes pregnant with the intention of working a reformation.

Was Jesus a healthy child, robust and constitutionally strong? We are inclined to think not, and that this may be the secret of that contemplative spirit which afterwards manifested itself in his subsequent career. Nazareth, in which he spent his childhood and youth, and probably part of his early manhood, was considered a very healthy locality, and from this we may infer that Jesus notwithstanding would enjoy the average health of humanity, and in the manifestation of an amiable disposition, realize much of the truth of the legend which declares that, as he grew in stature, he also advanced in favour with men; enjoying the companionship of the youth of the place, and being observant of the conduct and ways of his elders. Thus, in the ordinary routine of youthful village-life, would the days pass on, until his journey to Jerusalem would afford an occasion of much importance to the keen-eyed youth, who, although in a measure partaking of the roughness of country life, was nevertheless, sharp of intellect, moderately cultivated, and ready to gather further stores of knowledge.

MELBOURNE SPIRITUALIST AND FREE-THOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday July 16th, Mr. David Blair occupied the platform, the title of his discourse being, "Only a Bundle of Old Letters." He commenced by requesting his audience to suppose that in some old building they had accidentally discovered a bundle of old letters which on taking home and examining they found to throw a light on the history of the distant period when they were written, how interested they would be, and what value they would attach to them. He instanced the recent discoveries of old MSS. in a ruined castle near Madrid, which would necessitate the history of the period they referred to being re-written. He then proceeded to make an analogy between these instances and the epistles of Paul, which he considered contained ample internal evidences of their genuiness. He eulogised Paul, whom he considered to be a gentleman in every sense of the word, and after giving a short account of his birth, miraculous conversion, labors and death, concluded by stating that he had been the means of proving the resurrection and life eternal through Christ Jesus. At the conclusion of the address, which lasted upwards of an hour, a solo was sang, and the chairman called upon some person opposed to the lecturer's position to step forward, Mr. Drew responded, but before he could get a start, a lady in the body of the hall, rose in trance and commenced to speak. Her utterances were a protest against the idea of the Divinity of Christ, which had been implied by the lecturer. Would God, she said, come into the world, occupy a human body and allow himself to be murdered before he would consent to forgive his erring children? the belief was God dishonoring, a diabolical conception of our heavenly father. The salvation of man did not rest on his belief, but on his life and actions, if he had done wrong here he must compensate for it in the future. The speaker had read and believed in the Bible for 77 years, but had found since that much of it was untrue, reason was the test—the future was one of eternal progression—the doctrines of the scriptures were impracticable, self preservation was the first law of nature, you could not justly ignore yourself for others. The control apologised for encroaching on their time, and announced himself as the father of the medium. Mr. Drew and Mr. Sievewright briefly criticised Mr. Blair's lecture, and the chairman regretting that time did not permit further discussion, called upon the lecturer to reply, Mr. Blair complained that there had been no discussion, characterised the previous speakers' remarks as tomfoolery, and was called to order by the chairman. General dissatisfaction was expressed at the lack of opportunity for discussion, which was attributed to the length of Mr. Blair's discourse. The chairman declining to set aside the rules of the association, Mr. Blair proposed to take the Hall for an extra two hours, but refused a proposal to adjourn for a fortnight, and after some discussion the assembly dispersed. On the 21st, Mr. W. H. Terry lectured on the Moral Teachings of Spiritualism, demonstrating that Spiritualism as a religion was Eclectic, appropriating the good of all religions. This lecture will probably be published in *extenso* in next issue.

HERO AND HEROINE.

[*By the Author of "The Coming Time," London*, 1876.]

THE above is the title of a new novel, remarkable in many respects, for its dramatic ability and the purposeful nature of its instruction. The author is evidently of the most advanced school of modern thought, and touches on many of the questions of the day with a practised and determined hand; though contrary to the usual run of reformatory writers, he does not allow his disquisitions or opinions to occupy more than a subordinate part in the powerful and intricate plot, which no cursory review could do justice to. It is hard to detach a specimen of his style of argument, and there is but one scene in the book of so didactic a nature as to entitle it to a place in these pages. It is a conversation between the hero, Gilbert Thurston, and his peculiar confidant (Chapter 5, pp. 73-4), in which the key note of the story is first struck. The author is rumoured to be a well-known West of England professor, and certainly the landscape plentifully scattered through its pages points to one long familiar with the peculiarities of that district, and thoroughly alive to its many beauties.

"Well," said Ainsley, stretching himself as usual across the fireplace, and turning his cigar with an air of great relish under his dark moustache, as he settled himself in what he was accustomed to call his "pulpit attitude," "Man in his relations with woman is either a knave, a fool, or a brute, often a coward, and always a hypocrite."

Very different from the measured drawl of this dogmatic dictum were the rich and soft but swift enunciations of Gilbert, who, half lying ont he couch, poised his head upon his hands, and in this battlearray replied,—

—"One of the few good things Lytton ever wrote was to this effect—That anything concerning the value of money, or the worthlessness of women, would always pass for wit with the vulgar. Now I indulge in neither your cynicism as to men, or the popular verdict on women, I speak of the society which they create and compose, in which as Wordsworth says—

"Custom lies upon us with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life,"

"And so as Shelley continues it—

"Makes blind and obdurate the loftiest hearts."

You will grant me that while social reform is the most needed, it is at the same time the most difficult and dangerous of all.

"It certainly makes us most uncomfortable," rejoined Ainsley, curling his whiskers contentedly, and half shuting his eyes for the better enjoyment of his present unreformed state—

"You will also grant to me," pursued Gilbert, "that the relation of Marriage is the highest, holiest, and most important that man, or woman, can enter into. Both from the powerful influence for good or evil upon each other, of persons so closely connected, and because of its omnipotence with regard to future generations."

Ainsley with a glance of lazy remonstance at his earnes companion, nodded without speaking, and watched the curls of smoke vanishing above his head.

"You must own that the present conditions of these sacred relations are among the most deplorable and degrading of our many social evils."

Ainsley with languid intonation, murmured the old Greek proverb which is best rendered

"Two happy days in marriage are allowed
A Wife in wedding garb or in her shroud."

and smiled complacently upon his own placid bachelor existence. Gilbert continud with even greater energy—"It is a bondage—a licensed system of traffic in human bodies and souls. A slavery as complete and as debasing as the African and without even its fragile justification—entered upon in blinded haste, or in gross passion, continued in stupefied despair, in impotent anger, or in silent misery, concluded too often in sorrow and shame." Ainsley drew a long breath, gave a low whistle and turning kicked the coals in the grate. Gilbert with his face flushed paused a moment and then began again—"You understand me, I speak of the system as a whole and as seen from an ideal stand point, admitting freely the self satisfaction of many, who, in Holmes language, have not brains enough to go mad, and the perfect Happiness of the congenial few whom accident has brought together. I speak in the same spirit as Pope's Eloisa when in that glorious apostrophe she cries—

"Curse on all Laws, but those which Love has made,
Love free as air, at sight of human ties
Spreads his sweet wings and in a moment flies;
Not Cæsars' Empress would I deign to prove,
No, make me mistress to the man I love.
If there be yet another name more free,
More fond, than mistress, make me that to Thee,
Oh happy state! When Souls each other draw,
When Love is Liberty, and Nature Law,

Ainsley knitted his brows and seemed intent, but said nothing, while Gilbert who had risen to his feet paced the room quickly till stopping before him he resumed. "To be brief I have three propositions. Ainsley laughed, and said "I see your object, you are writing an Essay, well you have the victim, let his end be speedy." Gilbert none the less serious for a smile replied—

"First—Mutual Love is Marriage.
Second—Without it there can be none.
Third—The Present Ceremony is pernicious as it tends to violate these.

Ainsley thoughtfully—"There are great consequences from these. Your third seems paradoxical but plain. There must be some sanction to Society, some recognition of the Union, and this is the use of Ceremony, There are in fact—two securities required. One to Society, the other to the Individual, whom the the King delighteth to honor."

"I am prepared for this," said Gilbert again sitting, "there should be a Legal Contract of Partnership providing for the equitable management of possessions during the continuance of the agreement, and their division in the event of its dissolution; with provision for any Children or other circumstance."

"But the chief point of difference is this, continuance, or dissolution; how would you limit that? asked Ainsley.

"There should be no limit—When Love ceases marriages ceases of necessity."

"True theoretically, but are there not practical dangers to this scheme?"

"Less than there are miseries to the present," at once responded Gilbert. "Those loving will not part, those careless will become more careful and tender, knowing that in their behaviour depends the existence of their Happiness"

"Yet this will seem little to rely upon for Woman, who runs the greater risk."

Gilbert sang rather than said—

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
Faith and Unfaith can ne'er be equal powers,
Unfaith in aught is want of Faith in all."

There was a kindly tone in Ainsley's voice as he replied. "But Poets must not try to realise their fond Imaginations

"Exposing to the eye of day
Their delicate creations."

To a modern maiden this would be but scanty offering; she would at once, as "Ouida" tells us women love to do, test your affection by your obedience."

"And I should reply," said Gilbert, in verse again—

"I could not love thee dear so much
Loved I not honor more."

"Only a heroine would brave the world's scorn, and trust so nobly"—Ainsley replied watching Gilbert keenly; who colored slightly as he answered,—

"Love makes women heroines. Mary Wollstonescraft and Mrs Shelley as well as the greatest woman of this age have dared it, and why not another."

"You know these principles may be abused," continued Ainsley.

Gilbert speaking lightly, pushed his long fair hair from his broad forehead "What principles are not"—

"Yet that is not their weakness or their blame,
But their's that do abuse them unto ill;
Nothing so good, but that thro guilty shame,
May be corrupted by the wicked will—
But Love is Lord of Truth and Loyalty,
Lifting himself out of the lowly dust,
'On golden plumes up to the purest sky
Above the reach of loathsome sinful lust."

As Edmund Spenser hymns."

"You are a dreamer Gilbert, and a dreamer will remain"—

"Yes" said Gilbert, rather uneasy under his scrutiny, "I dream with Dante when Beatrice led him—

"Into the Heaven that is embodied Light,
Light intellectual replete with Love,
Love and true happiness replete with Joy,
Joy that transcends all sweetness of Delight.

"Beware that like the philosopher whose gaze was fixed upon the stars you fall not into a well" was Ainley's answer given with unusual vigour.

Gilbert did not look up as he replied—"Truth lives in a well and I think most find it by some such accident."

"As you have this," Ainsley's tone was full of meaning, and decided now, though still gentle "You are in Love Gilbert."

"Yes Ainsley," was the simple straightforward answer, given as it used to be, when they stood side by side at school together; his lips trembled a little, and his eyes were very full with the same honest look, that had disarmed suspicion in his Uncle's room, and checked the current of his mother's wrath.

"Have you spoken then."

"Not yet."

"Will you ask her to dare this."

"Assuredly I must. If she loves me as I love her, she will consent. It is wrong for me, an Infidel, to accept the rites of the Church; it is wrong for me as an Honest man, to obey a vicious Law which has caused so much suffering. Some must brave it and lead men to the better way. Though I doubt neither myself nor her, for the sake of Justice I shall dare it."

"If she refuse."

"I must bear my burden, and be as I have ever been —Alone. No, Not alone old fellow, I have you" —and he pressed the offered hand warmly.

Ainsley spoke slowly, while something in his throat made his half-jesting words more penetrating.

"Let me not to the Marriage of true minds admit impediment," but do not expect too much. You are a Hero, to accept this she must be a Heroine, greater than Iphigenia, greater is her trial than yours—be prepared for the worst.

"Yet because Right is Right, to follow Right,
Is Wisdom in the scorn of Consequence."

ITEMS OF NEWS BY THE MAIL.

We have received a letter from J. M. Peebles, dated "Chattanooga," April 27th, in which referring to his recent visit to Mexico and Yucatan, he tells us that he can connect the pyramds and ruins there, with those of Egypt and Phœnicia. He is writing a volume on his travels in Central America, and this will probably delay the time of his departure for this country. The "Chattanooga Times" speaks in high terms of his lectures delivered in that city.

Mr. J. J. Hartmann, the spirit photographer, has again submitted to a test proposed by his opponents. The gallery, marked plates, and appliances, of a determined sceptic being used, under these conditions three spirit photographs were obtained.

A most decisive test of the moulding of Spirit hands through the mediumship of Mrs Hardy, was given on May 1st, and repeated on May 4th. The hand being moulded in a locked box, in presence of a committee who attest the report.

The papers to hand by the California mail, contain many interesting matters, but the delay in their delivery prevented us giving extracts this month.

The A. J. Davis Testimonial.—The undersigned will be happy to receive, and forward subscriptions towards the above, the object of which is to relieve this noble and disinterested worker in the cause of Human progress from the necessity of close application to business, and thereby leave him open to further inspiration by which the world will benefit. W. H. Terry.

RELIGION.

Religion is a marvellous light,
Proceeding from above;
That charms, and fills us with delight,
And warms our hearts with love!

Creeds are like shackles that divide,
Perplex, and gall mankind;
Love the elixir we confide,
To heal, unite, and bind.

Love, first to God, and then to men,
To self, our neighbour too;
To cheer us, and to strengthen when
Our duties we pursue.

A sacred pleasure it imparts,
And self consumes away;
It soothes, and purifies our hearts,
And aids us when we pray.

When Earthly cares we'll leave behind,
For other spheres more fair,
That treasure need not be resigned,
We'll bear it with us there!

How long 'twill last, how greatly bless,
Is not for us to say;
'Twill yield the purest happiness,
The highest ecstasy.

RECLUSE.

OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGES.

By C. W. Rohner, M.D., Hamilton.

We translate here from the March number of *El Criterio Espiritista* an interesting leader on the subject of "Physical Manifestations" by the able pen of D. Suarez, who seems to have caught the first gleams of the rising sun of our grand philosophy of Spiritualism. Only a sensitive heart matured in the warm and genial clime of Hispania could have given expression to the thoughts so full of supernal inspiration contained in the subjoined essay.

We see everyday announced in the Spiritualistic press of the whole world truly surprising facts and extraordinary phenomena, so much so that if we were not convinced that neither the mechanical nor the physical laws, nor the general laws of nature, can ever be altered by anything or anybody, we might feel inclined to elevate their realization to the conception of those prodigies and supernatural efforts which receive in the liturgy of all positive religions the honorable distinction of miracles. Numbers of people are assisting to present these facts, pages are filled with their description, science analyses and studies them, they are the object of discussions and controversies, the tribunals sometimes meddle with them, and the frivolous laugh, the observers maintain silence, the truly wise men suspend their judgment, quietly waiting for the fact to analyse it first, and to reply afterwards, with the luminous affirmations of the truth, to the scorn and contempt of those who do not wish either to see or hear.

Nature herself, always prodigal and active, rends the veil which conceals her mysteries. The more we analyse and study, the more we find matter interpenetrated by spirit, the more we find spirit vivifying matter. Unknown forces which realise brute motions, rare effects of unknown cause, and surprising changes and alterations hitherto admitted by science, this is it, what appears, produces, and repeats itself in all parts of the world with a certain tenacity of purpose, and is an ascending progression; and nevertheless there are not many ready to explain from whence these things come, as if a new world was in the act of parturition, as if a new cosmical revolution was going to be initiated, as if new and wider horizons of splendour were on the eve of discovery for the human mind and the intelligence of man. The spirits raise their powerful voices at the doors of the wise, they touch lightly with their invisible wings the forehead of the thinker, and silently drag their flowing and fluidic robes through the places where suffering and misfortune dwell. Noises, voices, apparitions, shadowy forms in darkened rooms, changes of gravity in bodies, magnetic currents which counteract their inertia, and which in

the organisms produce the effect of a new vital sap, of a new circulating liquid, of a new heat which lights up the eyes with fresh splendours, and illumines the brains with new ideas, and transmits the thoughts through invisible wires with a velocity greater than that of the solar ray. And all this is manifesting itself simultaneously in every quarter of the globe, in all the high and low places, in the palace and in the cottage, in the great cities and in the little hamlets, all this a certain something wants to speak out, a certain something wants to manifest and reveal. It is thus that we become confirmed, that these revolutions in the ordinary march of life on our planet are not manifestations of physical forces only, but that, invading in grander proportions the moral world, the sanctuary of the conscience, and the empire of the intellect and reason, they have produced, and are still producing, an immense evolution in the ideas; new theories are initiated not only in philosophy but also in politics and religion, new modes of reasoning are introduced into new creeds, great aspirations towards the Infinite fill the breasts of men, as if all mankind felt itself impelled by these forces to realize a new progress, and was desirous of taking a new gigantic step towards God. Let us therefore be hopeful, for we have a right to hope, since science has laid hold of those manifestations; science itself now promotes their investigation, study, and analysis; science does not rest satisfied in its present surprise at the astonishing phenomena, and will continue its researches until it has found its proper bearings with respect to the unknown laws of the mysterious effects produced. In the meantime, philosophy is serious in her investigations and meditations, and contemplating the immensity of space, peopled by strange beings, and feeling that space is pregnant with intelligences which carry and convey the good news in a circuit round the world, she turns to man and says to him, "Behold there thy past, see here thy future."

SPIRIT CIRCLES AND THE USE OF THE PLANCHETTE.

SEVERAL enquiries having reached us in reference to the formation of circles, and the use of planchette; we re-publish the following, which appeared as an appendix to the Victorian edition of "What's o'clock?" as containing the necessary information, in a condensed form.

"To the Readers of this Work, who can sufficiently appreciate the importance of the subject treated upon, and are consequently prepared to devote a few hours to its investigation, the following brief directions will be found serviceable, and materially facilitate the object they have in view. A higher object than mere curiosity, is necessary to ensure Demonstration of the facts related. It is possible in some instances for persons to investigate successfully *alone*; but it is rare that all the qualifications necessary, are to be met with in one individual. It is better entered upon by an association of six (or more), individuals, with as great a diversity of temperament as possible. If able to get together the requisite number, it is better to form a circle in this wise; viz., let the company sit down around a moderately sized loo table, or light square one, with the dark and fair, or positive and negative temperaments alternate; sit in an easy position, with the palms of the hands on the table and the right hand touching the neighbours left, so as to make a complete chain, (have at hand a planchette and some large white paper.) The first indication of an Influence is a slight vibration or wavy sensation under the hand, although the table may not perceptibly move, if this is distinctly felt, a movement of the table is sure to follow. The most common movement is the elevation of one side of the table, but a rotary or lateral movement will often occur. Should a distinct movement occur, one of the circle should ask the invisible influence to move the table towards the person whom they can best influence as a medium; when this is accomplished all questions should be put by the person so selected, who acts as chairman of the meeting. The ordinary and perhaps most appropriate questions to begin with are, "Is there a spirit present if so will it move the table a certain number of times?" This being answered satisfactorily, make an arrangement with the unseen influence, that three movements shall signify an affirmative; one, a negative; and two *doubtful*. If the questions are answered fluently, suggest the use of the alphabet. The medium slowly repeating the letters the table being raised at the right one, until a word is spelt out. In this way where the control of the table is good, messages of a considerable length may be received. Do not ask questions on purely material subjects, nor presume that spirits know everything, or you will meet with disappointments. If after half an hour's sitting, you should not succeed in obtaining a movement, bring forward the planchette, lay a large sheet of paper on the table, and place the planchette upon it, between two of the sitters, the apex (containing the pencil) from them. The person to the left of it should place the right hand, and the one to the right, the left hand upon it; at first the arm may rest upon the table, but after a little while raise it, and let the pressure on the planchette be as light as possible. If a movement is obtained, it only requires application to lead to the reception of intelligible writing, which may come on the first occasion or take several sittings to develope. Should the first two not succeed, let two others try, try also different combinations, until you have exhausted the material of your circle, this will seldom happen; but if it should do so, it will be necessary to add to its numbers. To ensure success and progress, the circle should meet regularly, and when the best arrangement of the individuals composing it has been ascertained, they should be careful to occupy the same positions at the table on every occasion. If strangers are allowed to join the circle after it has commenced the reception of communications, it often has a disturbing effect, and is likely to lead to unsatisfactory results.

Most persons have some mediumistic power, and it rarely happens that where there are three or four persons in a family, they cannot get the Planchette to operate, even without forming a circle, but the evidences so obtained are not always so satisfactory as those obtained by systematic application. If the investigation is earnestly pursued, higher forms of mediumship grow out of it, in accordance with the developing capacity of the individuals composing it.

W. H. T.

TRANCE SPEAKING ASSEMBLY AT CASTLEMAINE.

SINCE the cessation of the Sunday evening services at Castlemaine, the spiritualists there have felt the want of some place of meeting for mutual improvement and edification. To meet this want to some extent, Mr. James Shaw, with his usual liberality offered the use of his room and harmonium therein, and several of the friends in his neighbourhood availing themselves of his offer, are in the habit of meeting there every Sunday evening for conversation, music and spirit control. Being in Castlemaine one Sunday recently, we accepted an invitation to be present at the evening meeting, and accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Bamford, arrived at Mr. Shaw's residence at about 7 p.m. In a short time the room was full, and every available seat taken up. After a little conversation Mr. Shaw gave out a hymn from the Castlemaine collection, which was sung to harmonium accompaniment. During the singing Mrs. Bamford passed into trance, and at its conclusion an excellent address was given through her, the tenor of which was that Practical Religion, and Harmonious living was the basis of happiness and true road of progression. Another hymn was then sang, and Mrs. Adams became controlled, and gave an interesting and earnest address. When the control had withdrawn, Mr. Shaw requested us to speak a few words, and after congratualating the friends on the pleasant and harmonious nature of the meeting, and edifying character of the addresses which had been given through their trance mediums, we endeavoured to impress upon them the necessity of practically taking up the suggestions which had been given them. That each one

present should fix their minds upon at least some one person on whom they could bestow their light, some brother or sister whom they could help, if ever so little, towards a better or happier condition. In the last address allusion had been made to our duties to children, and this reminded us of the Lyceum as a means of developing all the better faculties of the juvenile mind, we gave a brief outline of what was being done at the Melbourne Lyceum, and urged the friends present to keep in view the advisability of establishing a local Lyceum at an early date. We reminded them that all the good to be derived from the beautiful teachings they had received, was in endeavouring to apply them. Mr. Shaw in coinciding with our remarks, said that as singing and music was an important part of the Lyceum exercises, he thought it would be a first step in the matter to form a little class for instruction and practice, and said that his room, the instrument there, and the young instrumentalist would be available every Tuesday evening, and he hoped that the friends present would not only send their own children, but make it known to others interested, that they might have a goodly number present. The meeting which had been a very pleasant and enjoyable one then dispersed.

THE VOICE OF ANGELS.

A Monthly Journal Edited and Managed by Spirits. Jan.—May, 1876, Boston.

AMERICA is the birthplace of strange things, and certainly one of the strangest is the little magazine before us, which we made some allusion to in our April number. The following is supposed to be its origin :—Mr. Densmore, after many adventures by sea and land, and many changes of fortune (one amongst which was being captain of a whaler), settled finally down to the profession of a "psychopathic," or mediumistic physician, first in Philadelphia and then in Boston. One day, in friendly chat with L. Judd Pardee, formerly a well-known spiritual lecturer, but who some time ago "joined the majority;" the idea of a little monthly paper was started. Pardee eagerly welcomed the suggestion, but proposed that *he* should be editor, and *spirits* the contributors, and after some five years of discussions and objections, the *Voice of Angels* was the result.

The contents almost exclusively hail from the other side,—we cannot say the "summer-land," for much seems to come from a very wintry clime, and chiefly relates to the present state and advancement of spirits. Mr. Densmore, in the intervals of his work with mortals, seems to keep a sort of school for the lower spirits, where they are brought into contact with the higher and missionary classes. As a whole the results are pleasant and cheerful, but there are some very doleful and a few very touching tales of unfortunate souls waking up in darkness, and wandering for many years hopeless and bewildered. Finally, we recommend the *Voice of Angels* to our readers, as at least curious, and deserving the employment of a leisure half-hour.

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